

# ALPURTNEWS

SH1: NORTHERN MOTORWAY EXTENSION (ALPURT B2)

## New speed restrictions in place

With the start to construction on a large project such as ALPURT B2 there is always the inevitable and controversial issue of construction traffic on local roads. With this in mind, the Northern Gateway Alliance has been working with the Rodney District Council, Transit, Police and affected residents to ensure ALPURT B2 construction traffic creates as little disruption as possible.

In addition to the existing State Highway 1, some local roads are being used to access the construction site in hard-to-reach areas of the route. These roads are Weranui Road, Otanerua Road and Hillcrest Road.

The biggest safety issue on any road is speed and the NGA has moved swiftly to install temporary speed restrictions in at-risk areas. A temporary restriction to 80km per hour is now in place on SH1 between Titford's Bridge (at the base of Johnstone's Hill) and the Puhoi turn off.

Otanerua Road and Hillcrest Road also have temporary 30km speed limits in place. Traffic on Weranui Road has been restricted to 50km per hour between Waiwera and the motorway works, an additional limit of 30km per hour applies to the section of tight bends around the treatment ponds just west of Waiwera.

When travelling north on the state highway or on the above local roads, please observe the new, safer limits and keep in mind the fact that there are heavy vehicles operating in the area.

## Minimising the motorway 'footprint'

**Ecological concerns have been given a high priority on ALPURT B2 and as a result the project plans have been modified to minimise the size of the motorway's ecological 'footprint'.**

Vegetation clearance is one area in which the benefits of this approach have been realised in the early stages of construction.

"Our combined team of construction engineers, landscape architects and ecologists has been working hard to ensure that only those areas required for early works within the current funding allowance are cleared," says Project Director Robert Jones. "Their efforts in the field have led to minor modifications to our design resulting in a number of native trees of significant size being saved, reflecting our overall objective to minimise the environmental impact of our works."

Mature trees that are felled as part of the clearing process are kept aside for use as timber, while smaller vegetation is mulched and spread over the affected area. This process protects the soil by preventing it from becoming compacted and by promoting micro-organisms that preserve soil structure, which in turn assists in the revegetation process.

Wildlife inhabiting the area along the motorway route has also been taken into consideration. A specialist from the University of Auckland has been working with the Northern Gateway Alliance (NGA) to identify the breeding sites of the regionally endangered Fern Bird, which lives in RAP21 (Recommended Area of Protection). As a result clearing work will not



*This copse of young kauri are among those trees saved from the current clearing works*

begin until the end of the breeding season, when the chicks have left the nest. Lizards (mokomoko) in affected areas and fish affected by culvert construction are also being relocated.

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## Editorial



As the representative for the Puhoi Community Forum on the ALPURT B2 Community Reference Group, I have been asked to provide the guest column for this issue. I would therefore like to take the opportunity to comment on the usefulness of the monthly CRG meetings, of which there have been seven.

As stated by the Northern Gateway Alliance (NGA), the reference group was set-up so that they (the NGA) could seek the views of representatives of local communities affected by the development and construction of ALPURT B2. This input is to be used in the planning, design and construction of the project.

Like many people, my first test of a meeting or series of meetings is how well they are run. No one likes meetings that close well past the time set by the agenda, and at which questions end up as open ended discussions which extend the meeting unnecessarily, and become time stealers for the other participants. It is difficult sometimes to control such situations, especially without giving offence. However, overall, the meetings that I have attended have run very smoothly.

The result of such well-organised meetings has been that the NGA have shared with us a lot of information about the project. Such communication has been very valuable when discussing Alpurth happenings with our community. This has, of course, been two-way.

There has been a lot of robust and constructive discussion around the table. One such was based on our members concerns with issue of the termination of the new motorway and the Puhoi junction. So far in my experience, it has been seen (as it should) that robust, positively orientated discussion leads to positive results. As the series of meetings go on, one begins to see that not all objects are immovable and that this consultation process does indeed reflect a genuine concern for the environment and well-being of affected communities.

### Dave Dodsworth

Chairman, Puhoi Community Forum.

## Mokomoko on the move

Whilst not endangered, native New Zealand lizard (mokomoko) species are declining in number; they also play a very significant role in Maori mythology. It is therefore important that any disruption to lizard habitat is managed with great care.

The NGA has engaged the services of Envirologic Limited, who will trap and translocate any lizards affected by the ALPURT B2 motorway footprint. Although lizard relocation is not unique to this project, a recovery operation of this scale has never been attempted in New Zealand.

To date about 50 lizards have been captured, this number is expected to rise to 70–100 as trapping continues. So far two gecko species have been caught, the Auckland Green Gecko and the Forest Gecko. The team expects to pick up a few native skinks such as Copper Skink, Ornate Skink and/or Moko Skink as the operation continues.

The lizards will be held in captivity until DoC, iwi, and the ARC have decided on upon a suitable release site.



Auckland Green Gecko

Photograph courtesy of Simon Chapman, Envirologic

## Graduates join the team

Ten trainee earthworks operators graduated in early February following a month long training course run by the NGA in conjunction with the Gough 's Training Institute. The graduates, the majority of whom are locals, were chosen from more than 60 applicants.

The graduates come from diverse backgrounds and are mostly new to the construction industry. Following the completion of their course they accepted contracts for the duration of the project, expected to be four years and are now busy working in their new roles. Their education will continue on the job as they work to complete a six-month NZQA course in civil infrastructure.



The graduate earthworks operators are now at work on ALPURT B2

# Construction works progress report

Since the release of the initial \$20m grant by Land Transport New Zealand in December last year, the NGA has been making the most of the project's first earthworks season.

For maximum efficiency, construction has been divided into three sections – bridges and other structures, tunnels and earthworks. The earthworks section is then divided further into four distinct areas as outlined in the works update below.

Preparation works for the structures, tunnels, cuts and fills have been the focus of early works across the job. The installation of erosion and sediment controls, such as silt fences and sediment control ponds, make up a large proportion of these works.

Good progress has been made in each of the earthworks sections:

**SECTION A** – The northern-most end of the works, just south of Puhoi to the northern abutment of the Waiwera Bridge. Erosion and sediment controls are



*Haul road under construction in Section B*

completed in Section A, as is the clearing required to access the tunnel portal works area. Clearing works will continue, with a large number of mature pine trees scheduled to be removed from the side of Johnstone's Hill. Also underway are works on retaining walls and other enabling work for the tunnels.

**SECTION B** – The southern abutment of the Waiwera Bridge to the northern abutment of the Otanerua Eco-viaduct.

In this section current works include survey and setout, erosion and sediment control, clearing and topsoil removal. The construction of access and haul roads in preparation for the cut through Chin Hill is also well underway. Preliminary activities for fill areas, such as drainage installation, are also in progress.

**SECTION C** – The southern abutment of the Otanerua Eco-viaduct to the northern abutment of the Nukumea Eco-viaduct.

Survey and setout and pre-fill activities have been completed in Section C, along with some widening of the Otanerua track. Only minimal clearing has been done in Section C due to the Fern Bird nesting season, which ends in April. Ongoing works include earthworks, erosion and sediment control, clearing and topsoil removal.

**SECTION D** – The southern abutment of the Nukumea Eco-viaduct to the Orewa Interchange at the southern-most end of the project.

Completed works in Section D include survey and setout, erosion and sediment controls, pre-fill activities, preparation for cuts and the pre-load for the Orewa Interchange bridge. The 'pre-load' is a method of soil stabilisation where a 'load' of material is put down over an area and left. Over time its weight consolidates the ground beneath, making it less susceptible to settlement.

## Red's Corner

**Kia ora Readers**

**Kei te pehea koutou (how are you)**

**Reply: Kei te pai matou (all right)**

This is a typical Maori greeting, none of this longwinded intro about who I am, where I belong and what I have or haven't done that seems to have infiltrated Maoridom today. It is just a simple and sincere inquiry into your well-being and that of your family that was important and of course you never missed the opportunity to ask about the fishing.

Ahhhh, now you want to know who I am – I'm Red or Whero, one of the kaumatua involved with this project and I'm writing this column to share with you some of the issues, values and concepts important to us and our Maori culture such as what is **tikanga**.

The concept of **tikanga** is best explained as the correct or right way of doing something. What constitutes the correct or right way will continue to evolve and be challenged as long as people are involved, as is the norm in any society.

So what are we doing here? In a pipi shell, we are keeping our customary practices alive, in acknowledgement of the teachings handed down by our tupuna (ancestors). For example: the ceremonies performed at the commencement of works and when taking care of the mokomoko (lizards) which I will elaborate on in the next edition.



# Office Opening



*Rodney District Mayor John Law cuts the ribbon to officially open the Project Office*

On Monday 24 January, the NGA team moved into its new home at 208 Grand Drive Orewa, bringing them to the heart of the project. Opening ceremonies took place two days later with a dawn blessing

of the site, followed by the official opening ceremony in the afternoon.

Officiated by Rodney District Mayor John Law, the opening event was well attended, with representatives of Transit, the Community Reference Group, local Iwi, DoC, ARC, RDC, media, NZ Police and NGA staff all there to witness the cutting of the ribbon.

The purpose-built office, named Te Papa o Tanerua, also houses the project's Public Information Office. The information office is now open Monday – Friday between 8.30am and 4.30pm; access is via the SH1 / Grand drive roundabout.

## Coming Up...

April is looking to be a busy month for the NGA with the launch of the ALPURT B2 project website scheduled for April.



*Top: Project Office panorama. Above: Project Office opening.*

**ALPURT B2 Project website:** Due to 'go live' on Friday, April 8. Check it out on [www.northerngateway.co.nz](http://www.northerngateway.co.nz)

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ALPURT NEWS will be produced regularly throughout the duration of the project. If there is something you would like to see covered in the next issue, or would like to be on the mailing list, please contact Kate Woodruffe on 09 427 3614

